



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

EA

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/829,013	04/10/2001	Kazuya Fujinaga	Q64034	9560
7590	08/05/2005			EXAMINER
SUGHRUE, MION, ZINN, MACPEAK & SEAS, PLLC 2100 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W. WASHINGTON, DC 20037-3213			THEIN, MARIA TERESA T	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3627	
DATE MAILED: 08/05/2005				

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/829,013	FUJINAGA ET AL.
Examiner	Art Unit	
Marissa Thein	3627	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 24 May 2005.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date .

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____ .

5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)

6) Other: ____ .

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on April 19, 2005 has been entered.

Response to Amendment

Applicants' "Amendment under 37 CFR 1.116" previously filed on April 18, 2005 has been considered with the following effect.

Claims 1, 7, 15 and 20 have been amended. Claims 1-20 remain pending in this application.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The claim recites the conditional statement "if the buyer has applied for a transaction.....", which renders the claim indefinite since it is unclear to the Examiner what the scope of the claim is when the conditional statement

is false. The Applicant should consider rewriting the claim language to avoid the use of conditional statements. For examination purposes, the Examiner will take the broadest reasonable interpretation of the claims.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,141,653 to Conklin et al. in view of U.S. Patent NO. 6,233,566 to Levine et al.

Regarding claims 1, 7-8, and 15, Conklin discloses an e-commerce brokering method and system for mediating commerce (sponsor) between a plurality of suppliers and a buyer comprising:

- storing public data and non-public data in database of an agent, the public data containing standardized attribute information about a product supplied by the plurality of suppliers, the public data able to be viewed so as to compare the attribute information of each suppliers' product (a sponsor database; Figures 1f and 1g), the non-public data comprising set of transaction rules set for each combination of a supplier and the buyer (confidential data is transmitted securely to the browser through SSL techniques, wherein access to the data is by user name and password, col. 26, lines 6-10; when participants log into their protected

areas in the system's databases 225, they are presented with information regarding the latest development, if any, which have occurred in their respective negotiations, col. 26, lines 14-18); and

- applying to the agent for a transaction of a selected product, wherein the buyer selects a product from the database via the data communication network (placement of an order from a buyer, col. 23, lines 51-52; a buyer may want to know whether it can purchase such a product in high quantities at a reasonable price from any seller, col. 25, lines 30-34); and
- selecting a supplier and purchase conditions, wherein the buyer selects a supplier on the basis of the cost estimate and the agent carries out an ordering procedure on the basis of the purchase condition (Figures 16-18).

The Examiner notes that the phrase "if the buyer has applied for a transaction, the agent reads", the language does not move to distinguish the claimed invention from the reference (Conklin). The phrase is in a conditional sense or in the alternative. The noted "if" step is not necessarily performed. Accordingly, and as in the method itself, once the positively recited steps are satisfied, the method as a whole is satisfied -- regardless of whether or not other steps are conditionally invocable under certain other hypothetical scenarios.

Nonetheless, Conklin discloses the buyer has applied for a transaction (Letter of Credit), the agent reads transaction rules applicable to the buyer from the non-public data, prepares cost estimates, and presents the cost estimates to the buyer (col. 23, lines 51-67; Figure 16).

Furthermore, Conklin discloses starting negotiations with the supplier on the basis of the cost estimate to determine purchase conditions and a supplier (multivariate negotiation engine); ordering the selected product, wherein the agent carries out the ordering procedures for the buyer and the supplier on the basis of the negotiated purchase (Figures 16-18); and the purchase conditions stored in the non-public data are replaced by the negotiated purchase conditions (col. 24, lines 18-22).

However, Conklin does not explicitly disclose wherein at least one set of said transaction rules is established by a respective combination of supplier and buyer prior to the buyer's selection of a product supplied by the plurality of supplier. Conklin discloses the sponsoring standards body proposes initial standards. Conklin further discloses a sponsor, such as a traditional stock exchange or a new type of securities body could establish the standards for accepting stockbrokers into the community. Such standards might include compliance with applicable securities regulation. (Col. 17, lines 60-64)

Levine, on the other hand, teaches wherein at least one set of said transaction rules is established by a respective combination of supplier and buyer prior to the buyer's selection of a product supplied by the plurality of supplier (col. 6, lines 15-18).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to modify the method and system of Conklin, to include the least one set of said transaction rules is established by a respective combination of supplier and buyer prior to the buyer's selection of a product supplied by the plurality of

supplier, as taught by Levine, in order to provide the right type of products, thus creating an efficient market for trading products (Levine, col. 2, lines 16-18).

Regarding claims 2-3, 9-10, 13, 17 and 19, Conklin discloses where the database stores of conversion data indicating corresponding between code systems of different suppliers, wherein the code system of each supplier includes customer codes and product part numbers; and the storing conversion data including customer codes varying according to a supplier and product part numbers (see at least col. 28, lines 23-29).

Regarding claims 4-6, 11-12, and 14, Conklin discloses the buyer can view the public data cost-free (these browsers are distributed free of charge by their supplier); the supplier registers, updates, maintains and administers the public data stored in the database (08grpa in Figure 1k); and the agent stores a record of the ordering procedures in storage means whose data cannot be altered (sponsor's database, col. 32, line 54-col. 33, line 6); and wherein the buyer determines a supplier and purchase conditions via bidding conducted by the agent, individual negotiations or an auction with the supplier of the same products or services (col. 23, lines 43-58).

Regarding claims 16 and 18, Conklin discloses the database stores public data able to be viewed by standardizing attribute information about the same products supplied by the plurality of supplier so as to compare the attribute information with each other (Figures 1f; 1j and 1g).

Regarding claim 20, Conklin discloses an e-commerce broking method comprising: providing a database that stores public data and non-public data, the public

data comprising standardized attribute information about the same kind of products supplied from the plurality of suppliers, and the non-public data comprising sets of transaction rules for each combination of a supplier and a buyer (confidential data is transmitted securely to the browser through SSL techniques, wherein access to the data is by user name and password, col. 26, lines 6-10; when participants log into their protected areas in the system's databases 225, they are presented with information regarding the latest development, if any, which have occurred in their respective negotiations, col. 26, lines 14-18); presenting the public data to a buyer site (col. 19, liens 39-67); receiving an application from the buyer (Letter of Credit); reading the transaction rules set for the buyer and the selected supplier, and making a cost estimate to send to the buyer (Figures 16-20); receiving a decision from the buyer site, the decision containing a supplier from which the buyer purchases the desired product and purchase conditions determined on the basis of the cost estimate (Figures 16-20); and conducting ordering procedures (purchase order; Figures 16-20).

However, Conklin does not explicitly disclose wherein at least one set of said transaction rules is established by a respective combination of supplier and buyer prior to the buyer's selection of a product supplied by the plurality of supplier. Conklin discloses the sponsoring standards body proposes initial standards. Conklin further discloses a sponsor, such as a traditional stock exchange or a new type of securities body could establish the standards for accepting stockbrokers into the community. Such standards might include compliance with applicable securities regulation. (Col. 17, lines 60-64)

Levine, on the other hand, teaches wherein at least one set of said transaction rules is established by a respective combination of supplier and buyer prior to the buyer's selection of a product supplied by the plurality of supplier (col. 6, lines 15-18).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to modify the method and system of Conklin, to include the least one set of said transaction rules is established by a respective combination of supplier and buyer prior to the buyer's selection of a product supplied by the plurality of supplier, as taught by Levine, in order to provide the right type of products, thus creating an efficient market for trading products (Levine, col. 2, lines 16-18).

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-20 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

U.S. Patent No. 6,901,430 to Smith discloses an online system of locating consumer product having specific configuration in a enterprise production pipeline and inventory.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Marissa Thein whose telephone number is 571-272-6764. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:00-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Alex Kalinowski can be reached on 571-272-6771. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

mtot
August 3, 2005

James S. McClellan
JAMES MCCLELLAN
PRIMARY EXAMINER